

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 OMB-01

TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /099 W

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R 061540Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6775

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EG, LE, XF

SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT ON LEBANON

REF: CAIRO 11955

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1. ARAB LEAGUE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' DECISION, ANNOUNCED AT MIDNIGHT SEPT 4, TO HOLD SUMMIT MEETING ON LEBANON IN CAIRO IN SEVEN WEEKS APPEARS TO GIVE GREEN LIGHT TO SYRIA TO CONSOLIDATE ITS MILITARY POSITION IN LEBANON AT EXPENSE OF PLO AND LEFTISTS. YET, SUPRISINGLY

,
DECISION IS RECEIVING MILD PRAISE IN CAIRO MEDIA ("CAREFUL PREPARATION FOR SUMMIT ARE ESSENTIAL") AND MEDIA ATTACKS AGAINST SYRIA HAVE BEEN SLIGHTLY TONED DOWN.

2. SEEMS LIKELY THAT BEHIND-THE -SCENES CONSULTATION ARE CONSIDERABLY MORE SIGNIFICANT THAN DECISION ON SUMMIT. PRIOR TO DECISION, DEPPM/FM FAHMY MET WITH SYRIAN FORMIN KHADDAM FOLLOWING WHICH FAHMY STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF ADEQUATE PREPARATION FOR SUMMIT. SAUDI FM SA'UD, WHO TOGETHER WITH KHADDAM WAS PREVIOUSLY UNANNOUNCED PARTICIPANT, MET WITH PLO "FORMIN" QADDUMI, AS DID PRES. SADAT. PRESUMABLY MANY OTHER UNPUBLICIZED BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE. LEBANESE SHIA LEADER IMAM AL SADR, FOLLOWING MEETINGS WITH SADAT AND FAHMY, SAID HE FOUND GREAT READINESS IN SYRIA AND EGYPT TO IRON OUT THEIR DIFFERENCES. HE WILL REMAIN IN CAIRO FOR FEW MORE DAYS BEFORE GOING TO DAMASCUS.

3. IRAQ IS ONLY DISSENTING VOICE. OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM RADIO BAGHDAD REPORTEDLY SAID THAT GOE COULD NOT APPROVE SUMMIT UNLESS SYRIAN TROOPS WITHDRAW BECAUSE CRUX OF CRISIS WAS SYRIAN INTERVENTION

4. CONSIDERABLE REPORTING SEPT 6 OF RENEWED INTENSIVE FIGHTING IN LEBANON, BUT ONLY EDITORIAL CRITICAL OF SYRIA IS AHRAH'S ASSERTION THAT "SYRIAN BA'ATHISTS" HAVE DECIDED TO ESTABLISH MILITARY CONTROL OVER LEBANON BEFORE SARKIS TAKES OVER IN PREPARATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFEDERATION OF SYRIA, LEBANON AND JORDAN "TO CONTAIN PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE AND LIEQUIDATE PLO LEADERSHIP."

5. ORDINARY SESSION OF AL COUNCIL BEGINS SEPT 6 TO DISCUSS GOE PROPOSAL THAT PLO BECOME FULL MEMBER, DATE AND VENUE OF FIRST AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT, RESOLUTIONS OF MAURITIUS OAU SUMMIT, EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE, AND LIBYA'S COMPLAINT ON EGYPTIAN TROOP CONCENTRATIONS ON ITS BORDER.

6. COMMENT: TURNABOUT IN GOE POSITION FROM DEMAND THAT SYRIAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WITHDRAWAL FROM LEBANON PREREQUISITE FOR SUMMIT TO WHAT AMOUNTS TO APPARENT ACQUIESCENCE IN FURTHER SYRIAN MILITARY ACTION IS INTRIGUING. ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION COULD BE THAT, AS RESULT SAUDI AND KUWAIT URGING, SYRIA HAS SCALED DOWN ITS OBJECTIVES AND WILL ALLOW SEMBLANCE OF PLO TO SURVIVE IN LEBANON.
MATTHEWS

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